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RA - Ambassador Broier
DIRECTOR

Notes on US-Latin American Relations

It occurs to me that it may be helpful for me to set down occasional thoughts on our relations with Latin America, as they occur to me, and pass them on to you. I offer the following accordingly.

I refer to the view, the official standing of which you know, that in dealing with Latin America we should make clear by our acts that cooperation begets cooperation; that the United States is capable of reacting when unfairly attacked; and, that the self-interests of the Latin American countries is generally best served by cooperating with us. Our purpose should be to arrest the development of irresponsibility and extreme nationalism and their belief in their immunity from the exercise of United States power.

So far from taking exception to this view, I identify it with the general disposition of my own thinking. However, it raises questions and uncertainties in my mind that I rather think are basic in their bearing on our Latin American relations and that I have not myself thought through. I wish I could lay my hands on a quotation from Machiavelli, which I saw several years ago, to the effect that the greatness of a great power is manifested by the degree to which others sue for its favor, on which they depend, while it is itself relatively independent in its position and attitude. This seems, on the face of it, quite logical; but it may be that equally logical arguments could be made in support of views that conflict with it. I could say, for example, that the magnitude of the responsibilities that the United States bears in the world today gives it less independence in its policy and action, than is enjoyed by a state like, say, Costa Rica, upon whose actions, whether good or bad, no consequences of world importance will follow. If we made the wrong decision, when confronted by a choice between a petty immediate advantage to us and long-range considerations of greater scope, the free world might be lost; Costa Rica, however, could decide in favor of the petty immediate advantage with the

assurance

Latin Americans to favors that they merely consider them their due and are, in fact, angered by their inadequacy. Here we may have paid a long-range price for short-term gains.

I hope the proposed Latin American study will come to grips with these problems and make a good approach, at least, to some of the answers.

Louis J. Halle, Jr.

S/P:LJHalle, Jr.:mw